

read 10/15/92
discussed 10/15/92

El Schenck — ~~Ellis~~ Werner

Ends need work

Viewers asked to disbelief Schenck's
magic and believe in (+ Jack Frost
magic)

Involves kids more directly

Resolve so that Passages are not all dopes

{ I thought so } —
{ I never really believe him }

Asking audience to reject suggestion

(future telling) by accepting
magic (Jack Frost) (p. 10)

SHINING TIME STATION

"EL SCHEMO"

BY

ELLIS WEINER

From characters and storylines created by
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TORONTO DRAFT
SEPTEMBER 17, 1992

SCENE 1
(MAINSET)

(DAYTIME. SOME DISGRUNTLED PASSENGERS MILL AROUND NEAR THE PLATFORM, WAITING TO GO. AT MAIN DESK, INTONES FORMALLY.)

STACY:

May I have your attention please. I'm sorry, but the trains still aren't running.

(PASSENGERS REACT, EXASPERATED.)

PASSENGER 1:

What's the problem? Don't tell me the trains can't run in a little cold weather.

STACY:

The trains are fine. But this frost took us all by surprise. The switches along the tracks are frozen.

PASSENGER 1:

So what do we do? Wait a week until the weather warms up?

STACY:

People up and down the line are working on the problem. When the switches are shifting properly, we'll be up and running again. Meanwhile, thank you for your patience.

SCENE 1 (CONT'D)

(SHE SMILES, RETURNS TO DESK.
PASSENGERS REACT, GO TO BENCHES,
OPEN NEWSPAPERS, ETC., AS ON
PLATFORM ENTRANCE --)

(SCHEMER APPEARS, LADEN WITH OLD
SCARVES, GLOVES, ETC...)

SCHEMER:

Did somebody say "cold"?
Did somebody say bitter-
wintry-freezing-frigid
bite-your-toesies-off
cold?

(HE HUSTLES DOWN TO PASSENGERS.)

SCHEMER (CONT'D):

See Schemer, and get
ready for his quality
line of first-rate
quality cold weather
merchandise.

(unfurls ratty scarf)
TA-DAAAA!

(HE SEES ITS HOLES, ETC., AND
QUICKLY GETS RID OF IT.)

SCHEMER (CONT'D):

Not ta-daa that. That's
one of my test models.
Ta-daa...this!

(HE PULLS OUT ANOTHER, UNFURLS IT
-- MORE HOLES. HE THROWS IT OVER
HIS SHOULDER AND RUMMAGES THROUGH
HIS STOCK AS --)

(OFF PLATFORM, DAN ENTERS, RUBBING
HANDS, CROSSES TO STACY AT DESK)

(AT PLATFORM, GINNY APPEARS,
EXULTANT. SHE SPOTS SCHEMER, STILL
WORKING THE CROWD. SHE CROSSES TO
HIM)

SCENE 1 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER:

But look at this. One hundred percent wool, not counting the non-wool components --

GINNY:

Hey, hey, hey! There he is.
Schemer, you prognosticating
genius, you.

(SHE GIVES HIM A HUG AND KISSES HIM ON THE CHEEK. HE'S STUNNED.)

SCHEMER:

Uh, Ginny ...

GINNY:

I just love this man.
And so do my tomatoes.

(STACY AND DAN SEE THIS, GO OVER TO WATCH, UNDER --)

SCHEMER:

Ladies and gentlemen,
Ginny of Farmer's Dell.
Another satisfied
customer of Schemer
Winter Wear.

GINNY:

Winter wear my foot,
Schemer. I want to thank
you for saving my
beefsteak crop with that
miracle gizmo of yours.

SCHEMER:

Huh? I mean, which
miracle gizmo are you
referring to.

SCENE 1 (CONT'D)

GINNY:

(POINTS TO ARCADE)

That fortune telling machine. I stopped by yesterday, popped in a nickel to kill some time, and got the lowdown skinny from the Great Beyond.

(SHE PRODUCES A SMALL SLIP OF PAPER, HOLDS IT OUT. STACY TAKES, READS ALOUD AS PASSENGERS GATHER AND LISTEN IN)

-*Watty S. S. T.*

STACY:

"A sudden change in the weather. Take steps to avert disaster."

GINNY:

Which I did. Not that I'm superstitious. But I looked at those tomatoes, hangin' on the vines out there, and I figured, what the hey. So I covered 'em with burlap, fired up the smoke pots, and boom.

SCHEMER:

Boom? I mean, how "boom"?

GINNY:

Boom comes this frost! Tomatoes all over the Valley are freezing up and hangin' there like Christmas tree bulbs. But my little beauties are nice and soft. When the weather turns back, they'll come in red and ready.

SCENE 1 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER:

Ginny, let me see if I
have this straight.
You're saying my machine
predicted the future?

GINNY:

That's the deal from my
end. from where she stands

(PASSENGERS BURST INTO EXCITED
CHATTER WHILE SCHEMER REACTS)

DAN:

Can a machine really tell
the future?

STACY:

Of course not. It was a
coincidence

SCHEMER:

Coincidence? Tell that
to Ginny's tomatoes!

STACY:

Oh, come on, Schemer.
The machine happened to
say the weather would
change, and in this case,
it did. It was luck.

SCHEMER:

Miss Jones, I think I
speak for myself, and
Ginny, and these
wonderful people here,
when I tell you that I
am deeply offended. I
bring into Shining Time
Station a Machine that
can predict the future,
and you sneer. You sneer
and jeer. Shame on you.

(PASSENGERS NOD)

SCENE 1 (CONT'D)

(PASSENGERS CHEER)

Ladies and gentlemen, the machine awaits. Who wants to try?

(PASSENGERS YELL AND WAVE AS SCHEMER AND GINNY LEAD THEM TO ARCADE, WHERE THEY LINE UP AT MACHINE AS STACY SHRUGS AT DAN)

DAN:

Shouldn't we try to stop them?

STACY:

People have a right to believe silly things. What makes me nervous is, if they start believing Schemer's machine, they may start believing Schemer.

DAN:

That's impossible! Nobody really believes Schemer. (beat) Do they?

(STACY MERELY GESTURES "VOILA!" CUT TO ARCADE, WHERE PASSENGERS ARE ANXIOUS TO USE MACHINE, AND SCHEMER IS SLAPPING BACKS, SHAKING HANDS, ETC . . .)

SCENE 2
(INT. JUKE BOX)

(TITO'S VAULT. TITO IS ON LADDER,
LOOKING INTO PIGGY BANK EXCITEDLY.
ELEVATOR LOWERS INTO VIEW AND DIDI
STEPS OUT)

DIDI:

Hey, Tito --

TITO:

I know! The trains
can't run, so the
passengers are hanging
out in the station. And
that means they're
putting money in the
juke box, right?

DIDI:

Wrong.

TITO:

We gotta get upstairs to
play, right?

DIDI:

Wrong.

TITO:

They probably got ten
different songs they want
to hear, right?

DIDI:

Wrong ten times! They're
not putting money in the
juke box. They're
putting money into
Schemer's fortune
telling machine.

TITO:

What? that piece of
junk!

SCENE 2 (CONT'D)

DIDI:

Schemer told them his
machine can tell the future.

TITO:

But that's wrong!

DIDI:

You're right.

(ELEVATOR DOOR CLOSES; ELEVATOR
GOES UP AS TITO MOANS AND SHAKES
HIS HEAD.)

SCENE 3
(INT. ARCADE)

(DAN WORRIEDLY WATCHES AS THE PASSENGERS PUT MONEY IN THE FORTUNE TELLER AND RECEIVE THEIR FORTUNES AS SCHEMER SMILES)

PASSENGER 1:
(reading fortune)

"Good news from a trusted advisor. Be prepared to act on it."

SCHEMER:

Uh, yes, the trusted advisor is ... the machine! So to get some good news, get back in line and put in another nickel!

(PASSENGER 1 NODS, GETS BACK IN LINE)

(DAN REACTS TO THIS, BUT IS DISTRACTED BY --)

(AT BILLY'S WORKSHOP, MR. CONDUCTOR APPEARS)

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Psst! Dan!

(HE MOTIONS FOR DAN TO JOIN HIM. DAN CROSSES TO --)

(INTERIOR OF BILLY'S WORKSHOP -- DAN JOINS MR. CONDUCTOR AND KARA, WHO IS TAKING OFF HER COAT, GLOVES, HAT, ETC.)

KARA:

It is freezing! I was helping Billy but I had to come in. My nose is turning to ice.

SCENE 3 (CONT'D)

MR. CONDUCTOR:

I've been helping out up
and down the line too..
When somebody isn't
looking, and reaches for
a tool, and its a little
closer then he thinks it
is? That's me. I push
it over, it's the least
I can do, considering ...

✓

DAN:

Considering what, Mr.
Conductor?

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Considering that I know
the person who's
responsible for this
sudden frost. I asked him
not to do it, but he never
listens.

KARA:

You told who?

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Jack Frost, Who else? He's the
one who made it so cold
out there.

DAN:

Well, thanks to Jack
Frost, everybody thinks
Schemer can see ~~the~~ ^{into} future.
Ginny got a
fortune that said, look
out for bad weather, and
now it came true.

asked and
not to reject
no superstition
by accepting
magic

SCENE 3 (CONT'D)

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Oh, that was a coincidence. Jack Frost planned all this a long time ago. You know, it's funny. He loves to confuse people with cold weather, but personally he's really a very warm individual ...

(KARA IS AT DOOR, LOOKING OUT AT STATION.)

KARA:

Right now he could be Schemer's best friend.

(ANGLE ON WORKSHOP DOOR - KARA, DAN AND MR. CONDUCTOR PEEK OUT AT ARCADE WHERE SCHEMER CONSULTS WITH A CUSTOMER RE: HIS FORTUNE.)

SCHEMER:

" Supporting the arts brings ample benefits..." Yeah, that means, um -- of course! Talk about obvious. It means, put all your money into music--
(points)
-- there! In the juke box!

(CUSTOMER NODS, HEADS FOR JUKE BOX AS DAN, KARA AND MR. CONDUCTOR TRADE A LOOK.)

MR. CONDUCTOR:

You're right, Dan. All those people believe what Schemer's telling them. I'd better have a little talk with Jack Frost before this turns into trouble.

(HE DISAPPEARS)

SCENE 4
(INT. JUKE BOX)

(MAIN PERFORMANCE AREA -- THE PUPPETS ARE READY TO GO. DIDI IS MIFFED.)

TITO:

Here they come, children!
Beaucoup nickels and how!

DIDI:

That Schemer! He wouldn't know the truth if it slapped him in the face.

REX:

Maybe. But some people will believe anything, right, Tex?

TEX:

As long as it's what they want to hear, Rex.

DIDI:

That doesn't make it right.

TITO:

Can we discuss this later? Right now we have a job to do.
Namely, "Turkey In The Straw."

SCENE 5

PUPPET SONG: TURKEY IN THE STRAW

SCENE 6
(MAIN SET)

(OFF PLATFORM, MIDGE SMOOTH HUSTLES IN AND RUNS TO MAIN DESK, WHERE STACY IS TRYING TO DO PAPERWORK DESPITE THE UPROAR AT THE ARCADE)

MIDGE:

Where is he, Stacy?

STACY KEEPS HER EYES ON HER PAPERWORK, BUT SILENTLY POINTS TO ARCADE. MIDGE, HOWEVER, IS SO BESIDE HERSELF SHE DOESN'T SEE)

MIDGE (CONT'D):

I have just heard the most fantastic, amazing, incredible rumor -- so of course I believed it immediately. Because some things are so unbelievable, you just have to believe them.

(beat, reverie)

Just think. Schemer can predict the future. And I thought he was barely able to predict his own name.

has own birthday

STACY:

Nobody can predict the future, Midge. His fortune telling machine got lucky, and now everybody thinks he has special powers.

(ANGLE ON PLATFORM. SCHEMER, DRESSED IN TURBAN AND ROBE, APPEARS. HE SETS UP A LITTLE PORTABLE TAPE MACHINE NEARBY, HAS BASKET OF FORTUNE COOKIES IN OTHER HAND)

SCENE 6 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER:

And now ... the man with special powers. The man who Sees All. The man who can tell fortunes the way other men tell jokes ... let's have a warm round of Shining Time Station applause for the great ... El Schemo.

(HE TURNS ON THE TAPE PLAYER AND IT PLAYS A CHEESY "MYSTERIOUS FANFAIRE". HE SWEEPS OVER THE ARCADE WITH THE COOKIES. MIDGE SWOONS, FOLLOWS)

MIDGE:

Schemer --

SCHEMER:

Ah-ah! My Dear Miss Smoot! You weren't listening. You may address me as ...
(salaams)
... El Schemo.

MIDGE:

El Schemo? Well, it sounds like a city in California, but have it your way. Just tell me: are you on the level?

great line —
a New Yorker line

SCENE 6 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER:

On the level? My dear
quaint small-town
busybody, El Schemo is on
a level above that of
mere mortals. Am I not
He who Sees and Knows?

(STACY LAUGHS OUT LOUD. SCHEMER
DIRECTS HIS ATTENTION TO HER.)

You may laugh, Miss Jones
But I have found my true
calling, my mission, my
sacred cause. I look into
the future. And I tell
fortunes ... for the
unfortunate. How do I do
it?

(STACY TAKES SOME COOKIES FROM THE
BASKET. JUST BEFORE SHE OPENS ONE,
SHE SPEAKS SARCASTICALLY)

STACY:

I can't imagine.

SCHEMER:

I join in the cosmic
dance of the universe.
The dancing cosmic energy
of time particles and
space particles and
cosmic dance particles.

STACY:

And after you dance
with the particles, you
write down the future in
these cookies?

SCHEMER:

What's it to ya?

should do a cosmic
dance - a
Doorsbury character
parodying modern
dance

and what if I do?

SCENE 6 (CONT'D)

STACY:
(reading)

"You will spend your money in Schemer's Arcade." "You must spend your nickels in the Arcade." "Spend, spend, spend like mad in Schemer's Arcade."

SCHEMER:

The future speaks!

MIDGE:

Talk to me, future, talk to me!

(HE TAKES MIDGE'S ELBOW TO STEER HER AWAY)

SCHEMER:

Come Miss Smoot. I sense a negative vibration in the neighborhood.

(STACY STOMPS DOWN ON HIS ROBE, STOPPING IN HIS TRACKS)

STACY:

Schemer, this is one of the most outrageous stunts you have ever pulled. These people trust you, and you are cheating them out of their money.

SCHEMER:

Who dares to mouth off to El Schemo?

STACY:

The passengers in this station are my responsibility. I'm going to tell them the truth.

SCENE 6 (CONT'D)

(SCHEMER LEADS HER OFF TO THE SIDE.
HE WHISPERS URGENTLY)

SCHEMER:

Are you crazy, Miss Jones? This is the scam of my life! People are giving me money just because I tell them to! I should have thought of this ten years ago!

STACY:

You're betraying their trust in you.

SCHEMER:

I'm cashing in on their silliness!

STACY:

A lie is a lie. I'm going to tell them just how dishonest you are.

(THE PASSENGERS ARE GETTING RESTLESS, AND START CHANTING.)

PASSENGERS:

Sche-mo! Sche-mo!
(etc...)

(SCHEMER GOES TOWARD THEM, BUT STACY CALLS OUT.)

STACY:

Wait a minute, everybody
This is all a fake! He can't predict the future!
Don't waste your money!

PASSENGER 1:

How do you know?

PASSENGER 2:

What about the tomatoes?

SCENE 6 (CONT'D)

(SCHEMER TURNS, GLOATING, TO STACY)

SCHEMER:

There's no law against telling a bunch of suckers what they want to hear.

(TURNS TO CROWD)

SCHEMER (CONT'D):

El Schemo ... will speak!

(THE PASSENGERS CHEER)

STACY:

I think they're just bored. Once the trains start running again, all your so-called followers will disappear.

SCHEMER:

That's right. And they'll tell their friends. And each new train will bring a fresh load of customers!

(HE WAVES TO CROWD AS HE RETURNS TO ARCADE. STACY FOLLOWS, SCOWLING,)

(ANGLE ON ARCADE, SCHEMER HAS SET UP A PSEUDO-ORNATE THRONE, WHICH HE MOVES TO IN GREAT POMP. HE SITS AS CROWD GATHERS AROUND. HE SIGNALS FOR SILENCE, SHUTS HIS EYES, AND INTONES)

SCENE 6 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER:

El Schemo is receiving emanations from the future. The trains --

(MOCK HORROR)

Oh no! Say it isn't so, future!

PASSENGERS:

What? What is it?
(etc...)

SCHEMER:

All the trains will derail! All passengers should take the bus!

(THE CROWD STARTS TO MOVES AS ONE TOWARD THE PLATFORM)

SCHEMER (CONT'D):

But first -- Hey, hold it!

(CROWD STOPS, LOOKS BACK.)

But first, you should give all your train fare to -- El Schemo!

(THE CROWD OBEDIENTLY RETURNS TO HIM. HE GESTURES TOWARD VASE AT HIS FEET, INTO WHICH CROWD STARTS DUMPING ITS MONEY. HE LOOKS OVER AT THIN-LIPPED STACY, AND SMIRKS)

(AT FORTUNE MACHINE, MIDGE GETS A FORTUNE, READS, FROWNS)

MIDGE:

"Your home is your domain. Nature will submit to your design."
Is that so...?

(ANGEL ON SCHEMER -- HE GIGGLES AT ALL THE MONEY AS MIDGE ARRIVES.)

why?
who will
be protecting you from
things going wrong
in the future

SCENE 6 (CONT'D)

MIDGE:

Look here, Schemerino, or whatever your name is.

(HANDS HIM FORTUNE.)

Does this mean what I think it means?

SCHEMER:

(reads, cautious)

Maybe.

MIDGE:

I've got a stand of poison ivy out back that's been driving me crazy. What this tells me is, I should go tear that stuff apart with my bare hands and show it who's boss! Now is that right?

SCHEMER:

(beat, smiles)

Why not?

STACY:

Midge! Don't!

MIDGE:

Hot dog! 'Scuse me, Stacy. I've got a date with poison ivy.

(SHE LEAVES ON THE RUN. AT THE PLATFORM, SHE PASSES GINNY, WHO IS LEADING THE MAYOR IN)

MAYOR:

Ginny, I'm not sure about this. Sometimes I think Man wasn't meant to know the future and neither was I.

SCENE 6 (CONT'D)

GINNY:

You owe it to the town,
Mayor Flopdinger.

(SHE LEADS HIM INTO THE CROWD,
MOVING PEOPLE ASIDE)

GINNY (CONT'D):

Excuse us ... got the
Mayor coming through here
... Gang way for His
Honor ...

(THEY REACH SCHEMER WHO BEAMS
COCKILY)

SCHEMER:

Well well, Mister Mayor,
what can I do for you?

MAYOR:

Don't you know already?

(TO GINNY)

I thought he can see the
future. I don't like
this.

(HE STARTS TO LEAVE)

SCHEMER:

I knew you were going to
say that!

MAYOR:

(STOPS)

You did?

SCHEMER:

Yeah. Sort of.

2 can tell what you will do before you
~~3 can forecast what will happen do in~~

(if I'm lucky)

SCENE 6 (CONT'D)

GINNY:

The Mayor has an
important question.

(TO MAYOR)

Go on.

MAYOR:

Oh very well. Mr.
Schemer --

SCHEMER:

El Schemo's here for you,
sir.

MAYOR:

Eskimos? Where?

SCHEMER:

Uhm Your Honor, El Schemo
is me.

MAYOR:

Really, I had no idea.

(MIDGE NUDGES HIM)

Yes, yes. Quite right.
Here's the point of my visit.
I want to put a gumball
machine in my office.
But the Town Council
won't let me do it.

STACY:

The Town Council won't
let you put a gumball
machine in your office?
Why not?

SCENE 6 (CONT'D)

MAYOR:

Let me be more precise. Gumball machines cost money, Miss Jones. And I can not spend a penny of the tax payers' money without the Town Council's approval. In summary, Miss Jones, they will not approve my gumball machine. Well, Mr. Eskimo, what do you say to that?

SCHEMER:

(concentrates hard)

Just a moment ... it's coming to me -- Ah yes. Mr. Mayor, you tell the Council that if they don't vote to approve your gumball machine, they can't come to your birthday party.

MAYOR:

(shocked)

Oh, dear. That's rather extreme. Will it work?

SCHEMER:

It works with me. I predict it will work like a charm.

GINNY:

And he knows, Your Honor. Remember how he saved my tomatoes.

MAYOR:

Yes, so he did. Well, I don't like having to play hardball like that, but ... yes, I'll take it under advisement. Thank you.

(HE AND GINNY START TO LEAVE.)

ask future pointed question

~~What will the town council~~

~~do if I do it again~~

~~without them~~ ?

What do I need to do

to get ~~the~~ Council's approval

need

to threaten
them.

SCENE 6 (CONT'D)

GINNY:

One more thing, El Schemo. Should I buy that used truck I've been looking at?

Well this used truck
I've been thinking about buying?
Been working for another
5 years?

SCHEMER:

Definitely.

STACY:

Wait a minute. Who's supposed to be able to see the future? Schemer, or the fortune teller?

SCHEMER:

Miss Jones, at this point, the answer is both. Man and machine have become one.

STACY:

(to others)

Don't listen to him!
This is all a big fraud!

GINNY:

Many thanks, El. See you all later.

(GINNY AND THE MAYOR LEAVE AS STACY WATCHES HELPLESSLY. SHE GLARES AT SCHEMER, THEN COLLECTS HERSELF AND WORDLESSLY CROSSES TO BILLY'S WORKSHOP. SCHEMER CHUCKLES AS THE CROWD AGAIN GATHERS AROUND HIM)

SCENE 7
(WORKSHOP)

(A BIT LATER, STACY, DAN AND KARA
ARE IN CONFERENCE. ALL LOOK GLUM)

KARA:

I think Schemer is
starting to really
believe all this.

STACY:

What's going to happen
when somebody takes his
advice about something
important?

(ALL THREE SIGH AT ONCE)

(MR. CONDUCTOR APPEARS, FREEZING.
HE STOMPS AROUND TO WARM UP AS THE
OTHERS GIVE LACKLUSTER GREETING)

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Boy, you three look as
low as the temperature.

DAN:

Schemer's still at it,
Mr. Conductor.

MR. CONDUCTOR:

I know. And Jack Frost
thinks it's hilarious!
He says watching all
these people falling for
Schemer's story is even
more fun than watching
cars skid on ice.

] snowflakes dance in the wind

STACY:

If only the trains would
~~start running again.~~
Then everyone would leave
and this whole thing
would fade away.

SCENE 7 (CONT'D)

MR. CONDUCTOR:

They've got train
problems on the Isle of
Sodor, too. But I
suppose no one wants to
hear about that...

(BEAT. DAN AND KARA LOOK AT HIM.)

DAN:

Of course we do!

(HE NODS, BLOWS WHISTLE ...)

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Well, then what are we
waiting for!

SCENE 8
(THOMAS EPISODE #8 -- "JAMES AND
THE COACHES")

SCENE 9
(WORKSHOP)

(STACY, DAN, KARA, AND MR.
CONDUCTOR)

STACY:

I'm afraid we're going to
need more than boot laces
to solve our problem.

DAN:

We need to be inventive.

KARA:

Just like the driver was
with James.

STACY:

And we'd better act fast.
El Schemo is getting more
popular every minute.
Listen.

(IN ARCADE, SCHEMER IS LEADING THE
CROWD IN A RESPONSIVE CHANT.)

SCHEMER:

EL SCHEMO!

CROWD:

EL SCHEMO!

SCHEMER:

HE'S A DREAM-O!

CROWD:

HE'S A DREAM-O!

SCHEMER/CROWD:

GIVE SHINING/
TIME STATION/
TO HIM-O!

(RESUME - WORKSHOP)

SCENE 9 (CONT'D)

KARA:

He's a dream-o? Yuck.

DAN:

They think he's magical.
(beat)
But you really are
magical, Mr. Conductor.

STACY:

Dan's right. We need
your magic, Mr. Conductor.
Now, I have an idea.
But it's kind of risky.

MR. CONDUCTOR:

I'll try anything if you
think it will work.

STACY:

Okay, here's the plan.
If it backfires, things
could be worse than ever.

(THEY HUDDLE TOGETHER AND WHISPER.)
(HE DISAPPEARS, UNDER --)

CROWD/SCHEMER (OS):

Give Shining/
Time Station/
To El-Schemo!

SCENE 10
(ARCADE)

(A BIT LATER. SCHEMER IS LOUNGING ON THE THRONE, SIPPING A BIG FROTHY OVERDONE DRINK AND CALLING OUT TO THE LINE OF CUSTOMERS AT THE FORTUNE TELLING MACHINE)

SCHEMER:

Hey, single file there.

PASSENGER 3:

How come the machine
isn't talking?

SCHEMER:

It writes notes. It
doesn't talk.

(SUDDENLY GINNY, MIDGE, AND THE MAYOR ARRIVE, STEAMING. MIDGE IS COVERED WITH PINK CALAMINE LOTION)

MIDGE:

Schemer --

GINNY:

El Schemerino --

MAYOR:

Mister Eskimo --

MIDGE:

You have some explaining to do. I took your advice, and pulled up all that poison ivy. But it didn't submit to my design. It made me break out all over!

SCENE 10 (CONT'D)

GINNY:

I bought that used truck
you told me to, and the
thing conked out two
miles from the lot. It
needs a new transmission,
mister!

MAYOR:

And I ... against my
better judgment ... I
did what you said. I
told the town council
that unless they gave me
my gumball machine,
they couldn't come to my
birthday party. And do
you know what happened?

SCHEMER:

I predict you're going to
tell me.

MAYOR:

(impressed)

Why yes! I am. How did

--
(snaps out of it)
They were so offended,
they told me I couldn't
come to their birthday
parties, and then they
passed a law saying I
couldn't even eat gumballs
in my office.

jelly beans

(ALL THREE START BABBLING AT ONCE
AS STACY, KARA AND DAN ARRIVE)

SCENE 10 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER:

Uh, maybe you didn't do
it right --
(grandly)
El Schemo will explain!
(as himself; panicky)
Don't blame me. This
isn't the future. THE
future isn't here yet.
(grandly)
Ordinary people!
Silence!
(all grow quiet)
I will consult with the
Beyond. All of you --
put more money into the
machine!

GINNY:

This one's on you,
Schemer.

(HE REACTS, DIGS OUT A NICKEL, GOES
TO MACHINE AS OTHERS CROWD AROUND)

(INSERT: IN MACHINE, WE SEE MR.
CONDUCTOR, IN COSTUME, REPLACE THE
MANNEQUIN FACE)

(RESUME - SCHEMER ADDRESSES THE
CROWD)

SCHEMER:

El Schemo reminds you
that the machine will
issue a note which I will
interpret. The machine
itself, of course --

(PUTS NICKEL IN)

-- does not speak.

MR. CONDUCTOR:

What do you want, El
Schemo?

SCENE 10 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER:
(terrified, bleats)

HAH? Uh, um, what do you
know, it talks!
Tell me of the future, o
talking machine!

MR. CONDUCTOR:

You cannot see the
future. Nor can I.
No one can see the future.

(THE CROWD REACTS)

SCHEMER:

Um--ha ha! What a joker!
El Schemo admires your
sense of humor--

MR. CONDUCTOR:

You told these people lies
to get their money.
Shame on you!

less direct attack

SCHEMER:

Well, I--you know, I made
a few guesses about some
things--

MR. CONDUCTOR:

You twisted around my
messages. Your predictions
are all wrong. You are a
phony.



SCHEMER:

Oh yeah? What about
Ginny's tomatoes?

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Are you kidding? That
was a coincidence!



(THE PASSENGERS, MAYOR, GINNY,
MIDGE REACT)

SCENE 10 (CONT'D)

PASSENGER 1:

That's the last time I ever spend one cent in your Arcade. You fake.

SCHEMER:

An evil spirit has taken over the machine! El Schemo predicts --

PASSENGER 2:

You lied to us.

(ALL START LEAVING THE ARCADE AS THE GLARE AT SCHEMER)

SCHEMER:

Who are you going to believe? Some talking machine? or El Schemo himself?

(ANGLE ON MAIN AREA -- STACY, DAN AND KARA WATCH)

DAN:

I almost feel sorry for him.

KARA:

Almost.

SFX: TRAIN WHISTLE.

(STACY'S EYES LIGHT UP. SHE DASHES ONTO THE PLATFORM)

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Schemer...?

SCHEMER:

Can't you be quiet for two minutes?

SCENE 10 (CONT'D)

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Are you ready to
apologize to everyone?

SCHEMER:

Apologize? El Schemo?
Ha ha ha!

(ALL FALL SILENT, LOOK AT SCHEMER,
THEN TURN THEIR BACKS ON HIM AND
WALK AWAY. SCHEMER TRIES TO LURE
THEM BACK)

SCHEMER (CONT'D):

But perhaps El Schemo
will apologize. If he is
asked nicely.

(THE CROWD CONTINUES TO IGNORE HIM
-- AS STACY RUNS IN FROM THE
PLATFORM)

STACY:

The trains are running!
All aboard!

(ALL JOSTLE PAST SCHEMER AND HEAD
OUT TO THE TRAINS)

MIDGE:

I never want to talk to
than man again.

GINNY:

I can't believe I fell
for his line of hooey.

MAYOR:

(to Schemer)

And I don't think you
really are an Eskimo.

(THEY LEAVE)

SCENE 10 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER:

Okay! I apologize! I'm sorry! Really! (etc..)

(HE PLEADS AS ALL FILE OUT EXCEPT STACY AND THE KIDS. FINALLY SILENCE)

He should have the chance to apologize for... with people listening

SCHEMER:

Everybody thinks I'm no good.

STACY:

I wonder why? Could it be because you lied, cheated, and stole people's money?

SCHEMER:

That's not a good enough reason for everyone to hate me, is it?
(A BEAT) Okay, it is.

be mad at

STACY:

Are you going to pull this stunt again, Schemer?

SCHEMER:

(contrite)

No, Miss Jones...

(a glint)

But it was fun while it lasted.

(to deadpan kids)

I mean, can you believe those ~~dupes~~? Thinking machines can talk and tell the future?

people

DAN:

But the machine did talk.

SCENE 10 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER:

Dan, my lad, that was
some wise guy passenger
hiding in the back.
Okay, so he called
my bluff. But those
chumps really believed
it!

probably just
who was a ventriloquist
or something

KARA:

So the machine really
can't talk?

SCHEMER:

Kara, you too? Boy, it's
really true, isn't it. A
sucker is born every
hour. Meet two of 'em.

(ANGLE ON ARCADE - MR. CONDUCTOR
APPEARS, STANDING ON MACHINE)

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Sche-merr....

(SCHEMER FREEZES, PETRIFIED)

SCHEMER:

I didn't hear that.

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Sche-merr! It is I! The
spirit of the machine! I
think I'll haunt you for
the rest of your life!

SCHEMER:

No! Leave me alone!

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Don't you want me to tell
you the future?

SCENE 10 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER:

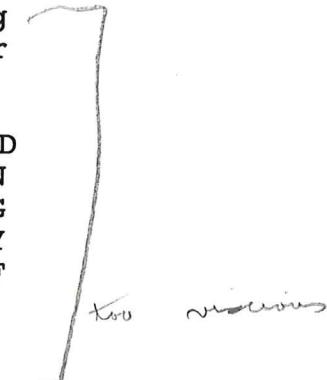
No! I'm out of the
future\$ business!
AHHHHH--!

MR. CONDUCTOR:

I predict you are going
to fall flat on your
face.

(SCHEMER TURNS AND FLEES WILDLY TOWARD
THE PLATFORM, TANGLING HIMSELF IN
HIS ROBE AND TURBAN AND FALLING
FLAT ON HIS FACE. HE FINALLY
MANAGES TO DRAG HIMSELF OUT OF
SIGHT, AS THE OTHERS LAUGH)

(FADE TO BLACK)



Two

visions